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Paul Joosten

Nuremberg, 25 June 1948

PAUL A. JOOSTEN
General Secretary
International Military
Tribunal

L-159

79th CONGRESS
1st Session

SENATE

DOCUMENT
No. 47

ATROCITIES AND OTHER CONDITIONS IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY

REPORT

OF THE

COMMITTEE REQUESTED BY
GEN. DWIGHT D. EISENHOWER THROUGH THE
CHIEF OF STAFF, GEN. GEORGE C. MARSHALL

TO THE

CONGRESS OF THE UNITED STATES

RELATIVE TO

ATROCITIES AND OTHER CONDITIONS IN
CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY

PRESENTED BY MR. BARKLEY

MAY 15 (legislative day, APRIL 16), 1945.—Referred to the Committee on Foreign Relations and ordered to be printed

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ATROCITIES AND OTHER CONDITIONS IN CONCENTRATION CAMPS IN GERMANY

To the Senate and House of Representatives:

Before relating the conditions found by the joint committee which recently visited Germany to investigate atrocities in concentration camps in that country, the committee desires to inform the Senate and House of Representatives the basis upon which the investigation was undertaken and the procedure by which Members representing the two Houses were designated.

The trip to Europe was wholly unexpected on the part of all those who made it. It was a mission undertaken with a view to the possible performance of a service to the Congress, to the American people, and to the cause of peace.

On April 20, at about noon, two representatives from the Office of the Chief of Staff called upon the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the majority leader of the Senate and laid before them a cablegram received by Gen. George C. Marshall from Gen. Dwight D. Eisenhower, Commander in Chief of the Allied Forces in the European theater of the war, which cablegram was as follows:

From: General Eisenhower.
To: General Marshall.

We are constantly finding German camps in which they have placed political prisoners where unspeakable conditions exist. From my own personal observation, I can state unequivocally that all written statements up to now do not paint the full horrors.

In view of these facts, you may think it advisable to invite about 12 congressional leaders and 12 leading editors to see these camps. If so, I shall be glad to take these groups to one of these camps. Such a visit will show them without any trace of doubt the full evidence of the cruelty practiced by the Nazis in such places as normal procedure.

A similar invitation is being sent to similar representative British groups.

General Marshall requested these representatives to contact both Houses, in the manner above-mentioned, for the purpose of arranging the designation of their respective Members to make this investigation with all the promptness possible.

In order that they might arrive at the scene of the atrocities which General Eisenhower desired the committee to view in person as soon as possible, it was stated that the group would be expected to leave Washington on Sunday morning, April 22.

These concentration camps had been uncovered by the advancing Allied armies, and the conditions were such as to make it compulsory that they be cleaned up as rapidly as possible, and therefore such committee as might be designated would of necessity have to arrive on the scene and make such personal investigation as they might think

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proper while the conditions were as fresh and unchanged as possible following the occupation of these areas by our armed forces.

As will be seen from the cablegram, General Eisenhower also suggested the appointment of a similar committee from among the newspapers and other publishers of the country, in order that they might have a similar opportunity to investigate these conditions which prompted General Eisenhower's request. During our interview with him at his headquarters in Europe, he advised us that when he visited one of these concentration camps, which will be referred to later, he was so horrified at what he found that he felt it incumbent upon him to request that the committee mentioned should come at once and see conditions as they were.

The Speaker of the House of Representatives and the majority leader of the Senate at once set about to consult with the minority leaders of the two respective Houses, with a view of designating a representative committee to respond to General Eisenhower's request with all promptitude. The minority leaders of the House and Senate, respectively, were immediately conferred with, with a view to their cooperation in the selection of such a joint committee.

It was agreed that six Members from each House would be designated, to be equally divided between the majority and minority parties in both Houses. While the Senate was in session for a short period on Friday, the 20th, the matter had been brought to the attention of the two Houses so unexpectedly that it was impossible to do more on that day than discuss the matter informally because of the contemplated week-end recess of both Houses and because, if the committee were to depart on Sunday, the 22d, as desired, it would be impossible to wait until the following week, either for the purpose of taking formal action in the two Houses of Congress or to consult more leisurely with respect to the personnel of the joint committee.

Under these circumstances, it was agreed that the membership representing both Houses should be immediately named, in order that the mission might go forward without delay. In appointing the Members of the House of Representatives, the Speaker indicated his desire to have representation from three of the House committees, namely, Foreign Affairs, Military Affairs, and Naval Affairs. But this suggestion was informal, and there was no definite agreement as between the two groups as to what committees should be represented. On the whole, however, this arrangement was followed.

During the afternoon and evening of Friday, the 20th, and Saturday morning, the 21st, the majority and minority leaders of the Senate frequently conferred as to the personnel of the Senate portion of the joint committee. During the morning of the 21st, the minority leader of the Senate, the Senator from Maine, Mr. White, advised the majority leader he was ready to recommend, on the part of the minority, the Senator from Illinois, Mr. Brooks, the Senator from Nebraska, Mr. Wherry, and the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. Saltonstall.

The majority leader of the Senate asked the Senator from Georgia, Mr. George, acting chairman of the Committee on Foreign Relations, and the Senator from Utah, Mr. Thomas, chairman of the Committee on Military Affairs, to become members of the Senate group; and he sought to have the Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. Walsh, chairman

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of the Committee on Naval Affairs, included as the third member of the group to represent the Senate majority. The Senator from Georgia and the Senator from Utah indicated their willingness to accept this assignment, but the Senator from Massachusetts had left the city for his home in Massachusetts and was not expected to return until the following Monday. It was, therefore, impossible to confer with him about his possible appointment as a member of the committee. He has since indicated that it would have been impossible for him to have become a member of the committee if he had been in Washington. After the Speaker of the House of Representatives and the minority leader of the Senate advised the majority leader of the Senate on Saturday morning the names of the Members designated by them, respectively, a conference was called of the entire group at 1 o'clock on Saturday afternoon to receive the information necessary from the War Department concerning the hour of departure and the requirements and needs of the various members of the group upon their arrival in Europe. During this conference the members of the group urged the majority leader of the Senate to become a member of the committee and make the trip, which he decided to do, and therefore he became a member of the group in lieu of the Senator from Massachusetts, chairman of the Committee on Naval Affairs. This, in brief, is the basis for the appointment of the various members and the basis for the trip itself. The committee, thus appointed, consisted of the following members:

The Senator from Kentucky, Mr. Alben W. Barkley.
The Senator from Georgia, Mr. Walter F. George.
The Senator from Utah, Mr. Elbert D. Thomas.
The Senator from Illinois, Mr. C. Wayland Brooks.
The Senator from Nebraska, Mr. Kenneth S. Wherry.
The Senator from Massachusetts, Mr. Leverett Saltonstall.
Representative R. Ewing Thomason from Texas.
Representative James P. Richards from South Carolina.
Representative Ed. V. Izac from California.
Representative John M. Vorys from Ohio.
Representative James W. Mott from Oregon.
Representative Dewey Short from Missouri.

It ought to be stated that nobody in the War Department made any suggestions, directly or indirectly, as to who should be appointed on this joint committee. When the members of the committee were appointed, in the way which has been indicated, the War Department was advised of the personnel and was represented at the conference held on Saturday afternoon to make arrangements for the trip.

The entire group departed at noon on Sunday, the 22d, by air transportation arranged by the War Department, accompanied by representatives of that Department, and arrived in Paris in the late afternoon of Monday, April 23.

Before setting forth the conditions which the committee found at the three camps which it visited, all of which will be described later, the committee feels that it is advisable to state the general character and purpose of the camps, as well as the character of the evidence which it obtained, and upon which this report is based.

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There are more than 100 concentration camps for slave laborers and political prisoners in Germany. No attempt was made to conceal them, and all were built in thickly populated areas and many of them along main highways. Your committee visited 3 of these camps located in widely separated parts of Germany, namely, Buchenwald, in Thüringen Province; Nordhausen, in Saxony; and Dachau, in Bavaria. These three camps are typical of all the concentration camps in the Reich, and their physical characteristics, functions, management, and operation furnish an accurate cross section of the entire German political-prisoner camp system and policy.

Before proceeding with detailed statements concerning the several camps visited, we believe a preliminary word as to just what these camps are and just what they are used for would be of value. In the first place, the concentration camps for political prisoners must not be confused with the prisoner-of-war camps. No prisoners of war are confined in any of these political-prisoner camps, and there is no relationship whatever between a concentration camp for political prisoners and a camp for prisoners of war.

The concentration camps for political prisoners are precisely what the name implies. They are places of incarceration, punishment, and liquidation of civilians who were opposed to, or who were suspected of being opposed to, the Hitler regime. A number of them were established at the beginning of that regime. At first these camps contained only German political prisoners. When the Germans overran and occupied the adjacent lands of Poland, Russia, France, Holland, Belgium, Czechoslovakia, and other countries, the camps were expanded both in size and number to accommodate the hundreds of thousands of additional political prisoners brought in from those countries.

During the past month all of these camps have been uncovered by the rapid advance of the Allied armies. At the time of our visit the surviving prisoners were still in the camps and were being cared for by the American military forces. These liberated prisoners will be sent to their home countries when facilities for that purpose are available; and some, in fact, have already been sent home. When we saw the camps, however, they were filled practically to capacity with prisoners. This was especially the case at Dachau, which camp we inspected only 48 hours after the SS garrison in charge of it had been driven out by the American troops.

THE THREE CLASSES OF EVIDENCE UPON WHICH THIS REPORT IS BASED

We think it is important, also, to make a statement at this point regarding the character of evidence gathered on our visits to these camps, so that the basis for the detailed recital which follows may be clear and unambiguous.

Three classes or kinds of evidence were presented to us. The first was the visual inspection of the camps themselves, freshly freed of SS supervision by the American troops. We saw the barracks, the work places, the physical facilities for torture, degradation, and execution. We saw the victims, both dead and alive, of the atrocities practiced at these camps. We saw the process of liquidation by

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starvation while it was still going on. We saw the indescribable filth and smelled the nauseating stench before it was cleaned up, and we saw a number of victims of this liquidation process actually die.

The second kind of evidence we obtained was the testimony of eyewitnesses among the prisoners themselves to these atrocities. Many of the prisoners had been in the camps we visited as long as 3 and 4 years. Many others had spent long terms as prisoners in several other similar camps. While these prisoners included men from nearly all the countries of central Europe, whose speech, whose station in life, and whose education and previous environment differed widely from one another, yet the testimony of all of these witnesses was substantially the same. Directly and through interpreters we talked to prisoners who had seen the hangings and the beatings and who had themselves experienced the systematic process of starvation, corporal punishment, and human degradation.

The third kind of evidence was what may be called the common knowledge of the camp, that is to say, evidence of things done in the camp which were not done publicly but which, nevertheless, all prisoners were aware of. This is similar to certain knowledge possessed by prisoners generally in legitimate institutions like State penitentiaries. These prisoners, from custom and experience, from the conversation with the guards and among themselves, and from a very plain and almost mathematical kind of circumstantial evidence, have accurate knowledge of certain things which they have not actually seen with their own eyes. The prisoners at the camps speak about these things as though they had actually seen them. It was the unanimous opinion of our committee after talking to hundreds of prisoners that this third kind of evidence was often as accurate and reliable as the two kinds of direct evidence above referred to. An example of this kind of evidence will be found in that part of our report dealing with the torture chamber at Buchenwald, where no one actually saw the strangulations perpetrated in this chamber, but where the circumstantial evidence of it was so complete and clear as to leave no doubt in the mind of anyone.

The three kinds of evidence here referred to constitute the only evidence accepted by this committee in making its report. Rumor, hearsay, and every other form of information or testimony has been carefully excluded so that those reading the report may be assured that everything therein described was either actually seen by us or reported to us by competent and reliable eyewitnesses or that it is based on circumstantial evidence which we have considered to be trustworthy.

One further preliminary observation may not be out of place here, and that is that all of the facts here recited are corroborated by the records of the investigation of the military authorities, who have made a most minute, careful, and exhaustive examination of all of the prison camps. These authorities, who are specialists in their line, have taken the testimony of hundreds of eyewitnesses and have carefully authenticated and documented the same. The committee has examined some of this documented evidence, but it has not used any of it in making this report. The report is based exclusively upon our own personal investigation of these camps.

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PART 2. GEOGRAPHY AND STATISTICS—BUCHENWALD

On the morning of April 24, following its arrival in Paris on the afternoon of Monday, the 23d, the committee, accompanied by Brig. Gen. John M. Weir, Col. Robert H. Thompson, Col. John A. Hall, and photographers, left Paris by airplane for Weimar, which is located in the province of Thüringen, Kriese, county of Weimar, about 120 miles southwest of Berlin, and proceeded from Weimar by automobile to the outskirts of the city, where was located the German political concentration camp of Buchenwald.

This camp was founded when the Nazi Party first came into power in 1933 and has been in continuous operation since that time, although its largest population dates from the beginning of the present war. The camp was overrun by the American Army on April 12, 1945. The first appearance of the Americans at Buchenwald was made by a tank spearhead, which briefly engaged the enemy and withdrew. The garrison of SS troops at Buchenwald became so alarmed at the rapid approach of United States troops that they fled precipitately, abandoning the camp completely. On Friday, the 13th, the main body of advancing United States troops arrived with supplies and medicine and took over the camp.

The surviving population of the camp, as recorded on April 16, 1945, was about 20,000, divided into nationalities as follows:

French	2,900
Polish	3,800
Hungarians	1,240
Yugoslavs	570
Russians	4,380
Dutch	324
Belgians	622
Austrians	550
Italians	242
Czechs	2,105
Germans	1,800
Dutch	260
Anti-Franco Spanish and miscellaneous	1,207
Total	20,000

The character of the surviving population was all male and included a thousand boys under 14 years of age. The prisoners at this camp included the intelligentsia and "leadership" groups from continental Europe, as well as "democratic" or anti-Nazi Germans and their relatives. Among the 20,000 survivors were about 4,000 Jews.

The mission of this camp was an extermination factory, and the means of extermination were starvation, beatings, tortures, incredibly crowded sleeping conditions, and sickness. The effectiveness of these measures was enhanced by the requirement that the prisoners work in an adjacent armament factory for the manufacture of machine guns, small arms, ammunition, and other material for the German Army. The factory operated 24 hours a day, using two 12-hour shifts of prisoners. At the time your committee visited the camp, the factories were no longer in operation, having been totally destroyed by

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remarkably effective precision bombing. The factory area was completely demolished, but not one bomb fell within the camp area, which was immediately adjacent to the factory area and separated from it only by a barbed-wire fence. In addition to those inmates performing slave labor at the munitions factory, other inmates were organized into labor parties to perform various kinds of work on farms in the vicinity of Weimar.

The main elements of Buchenwald included the "Little Camp," the "regular barracks," and the "hospital," the medical experimentation building, the body-disposal plant, and the ammunition factory.

THE "LITTLE CAMP"

The prisoners in this camp slept on triple-decked shelves, the clearance height between the shelves being little more than 2 feet. They were so crowded into these shelves that the cubic content figured out to about 35 cubic feet per man, as against the minimum for health of 600 cubic feet prescribed by United States Army Regulations. We were informed that after arriving, new prisoners were initiated by spending at least 6 weeks here before being "graduated" to the "regular barracks." During this initiation prisoners were expected to lose about 40 percent in weight. Jews, however, seldom, if ever, graduated to the regular barracks. Camp disciplinary measures included transferring recalcitrant prisoners back to the "Little Camp." As persons became too feeble to work, they were also sent back to the "Little Camp" or to the "hospital." Rations were less than at the regular barracks, and the death rate in the "Little Camp" was very high, recently about 50 per day.

REGULAR BARRACKS

The dormitory room here was approximately 42 by 23 feet and about 10 feet high, having a content of about 9,500 cubic feet. In each such room there was installed, triple-decked, 38 stacks of 3 bunks each, or a total of 114 bunks, each bunk 30 by 72 inches outside measurement. Most of these bunks were double; that is, 2 parallel bunks occupying the space of 60 by 72 inches. The aisles were narrow, being less than 24 inches wide, and permitted movement through them only with the body being kept edgewise; 114 bunks placed in 9,500 cubic feet makes less than 85 cubic feet per person. Since the beginning of the war, 250 persons have been made to sleep in each such room, or less than 40 cubic feet per person. There was less than one blanket per prisoner. Blankets were thin, shoddy, and undersized. There was substantially no heat in these dormitories.

THE HOSPITAL

This was a building where moribund persons were sent to die. No medicines were available, and hence no therapy was possible. Typhus and tuberculosis were rampant in the camp. About half of the wards of the hospital were about 15 feet deep and 5½ feet wide, with 1 window on the outside end. From 6 to 9 "patients" occupied each ward, lying crosswise on the floor shoulder to shoulder. The room was too narrow for most of them to extend their legs. The death rate in the "hospital" was from 5 to 20 persons per day.

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MEDICAL EXPERIMENT BUILDING

Block No. 41 in the camp was used for medical experiments and vivisections, with prisoners as "guinea pigs." Medical scientists came from Berlin periodically to reenforce the experimental staff. In particular, new toxins and antitoxins were tried out on prisoners. Few prisoners who entered this experimental building ever emerged alive. Prisoners were induced to "volunteer" for experimentation on the representation that living quarters provided there were far superior to those in the barracks and that their rations were far superior to those received by ordinary prisoners.

THE BODY-DISPOSAL PLANT OR CREMATORY

The design of this installation was a striking example of "German industrial efficiency." It had a maximum disposal capacity of about 400 bodies per 10-hour day, which is about 2 percent of the camp population at the time of liberation. We were informed that when the death rate exceeded the capacity of the crematory, the bodies were taken out and buried in pits without any means for identification. Teeth having gold fillings were extracted prior to cremating the bodies. We have been advised that on the day following our visit to Buchenwald a large cache of gold fillings and gold jewelry was discovered in a quarry near the camp. Included were literally thousands of wedding rings alone.

The crematory was entirely enclosed within a high board fence. No one, except a small operating force of SS personnel, were allowed even to look inside this fence. No prisoner who passed within it—as a member of a labor party or for any other reason—came out alive. Inside this fence was the incinerator building, centrally located between 2 yards. This building was of substantial brick construction with cement floors, 1 story high, with full-size 12-foot-high basement beneath. The main floor contained an administration office at the front end, a locker and washroom for SS personnel at the far end, and the incinerator room in the center. The latter contained, in line, 2 batteries of 3 firebrick incinerators each. Fifteen to twenty minutes were required for the incineration of a total of 18 bodies, each incinerator having a capacity of 3 bodies, or a total charge of 18 bodies. Fifteen to twenty minutes were required for the incineration of a charge.

The floor of each incinerator consisted of a coarse grate, through which the day's accumulation of bone ash was extracted at the end of operation. The fire came from a furnace room occupying the rear two-thirds of the basement, the flames being deflected downward onto the bodies by baffle plates in the roofs of the furnace. Fuel used in this plant was coal. The front of the basement was occupied by the strangling room.

The method of collecting bodies was as follows: Roll call was held every evening outdoors outside the dormitory buildings. Internees were required to strip and bring to roll call the naked bodies of all comrades who had died during the previous 24 hours. After roll call a motortruck drove around the camp, picked up the bodies, and was

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driven to the front yard of the incinerator plant to await the next day's operation. But this was not the only source of bodies. Emaciated prisoners who "had been around too long" or who had committed infractions of discipline or who "knew too much" or who had refused to be broken in mind were arbitrarily condemned to death. For instance, in the "Little Camp," where prisoners slept 16 to a shelf, an infraction of discipline—particularly an attempt to escape—not infrequently resulted in all 16 being condemned. Such persons were immediately marched on foot to a small door in the fence of the back yard at a point immediately adjacent to the incinerator building. This door opened inward until it hit a door stop which held it in a position parallel to the building's wall, thus creating a corridor 4 feet wide and 3 feet deep. At the far end was an opening about 4 feet by 4 feet, flush with the ground, the head of a concrete shaft, about 13 feet deep, the bottom floor of which was a continuation of the concrete floor of the room at the front end of the basement. The condemned prisoners, on being hurried and pushed through the door in the fence, inevitably fell into this shaft and crashed 13 feet down to the cement cellar floor. This room, on the floor at one end of which they now found themselves, was the strangling room. As they hit the floor they were garroted, with a short double-end noose, by SS guards and hung on hooks along the side walls, about 6½ feet above the floor, the row of hooks being 45 or 50 in number. At the time of our visit all of the hooks except 5 had been removed, but we could observe the holes where the other hooks had previously been. When a consignment had been hung up, any who were still struggling were stunned by a wooden mallet, which was exhibited to us in the chamber still bearing stains of blood. The bodies were left on the hooks until called for by the incinerator crew. An electric elevator, with an estimated capacity of 18 bodies, ran up to the incinerator room, which was on the floor above the strangling room. The day's quota of approximately 200 bodies was made up of from 120 to 140 prisoners who had died—mostly in the "hospital," the medical experimental building, or the "Little Camp"—and from 60 to 80 were supplied by the strangulation room.

For a period of about 10 days in March the coal supply for the incinerator ran out. The incinerator furnace grates had not been cleared of entirely unconsumed bodies, as we observed portions thereof. Awaiting the arrival of a new supply of coal, bodies, to the number of about 1,800, were allowed to collect in the front yard, stacked up like cordwood. The sudden arrival of American armor prevented the SS garrison from disposing of the bodies which had accumulated, due to the lack of fuel for the incineration plant. At the time of our visit to the camp we saw a truckload of bodies within the area of the incinerator. It is estimated that there were about 60 bodies in this truck. Near the truck, on the ground, were piled about 20 or 25 additional bodies. We were advised that the death rate, prior to the liberation, was approximately 200 per day. At the time of our visit the American medical authorities had been able to reduce the death rate to about 20 per day. Upon liberation of the camp, the American authorities provided decent interment for the unburied dead and for those who died thereafter.

The American surgeon stated that the adult corpses weighed from about 60 to 80 pounds each.

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MISCELLANEOUS

Rations: We were advised that the ration allowance for the regular camp was between 600 to 700 calories per day and consisted generally of a very weak soup made from cabbage and other vegetables and a small piece of bread about 3 inches square. This meal was provided only once a day—in the morning and in the evening another small piece of bread was furnished. The diet was heavily deficient in animal fats and vitamins and contained no meats. In the "Little Camp" the ration allowance was about 500 calories. About 3,000 to 3,600 calories per day is required for adult health. Red Cross packages were almost entirely appropriated by the SS camp commander and distributed to suit himself to SS personnel and to citizens of Weimar and even to Nordic German camp prisoners. Meals were prepared and "served" by prisoner personnel under SS supervision.

The committee was informed that the SS troops had received orders to destroy all of the occupants of the camp prior to their departure, but in their haste to flee before the advancing American troops they had been unable to undertake such a large-scale operation.

The administration of the camp and the maintenance of records were carried on by prisoners under the supervision of SS troops. The available records at the time of liberation had been examined by the prisoners engaged in the administration of the camp, and the records revealed that 51,000 persons had died in the camp. At the time of our arrival the prisoners, in a pathetic gesture, had erected, of flimsy materials, a memorial to the dead of Buchenwald. Pictures and descriptions of the conditions at this camp cannot adequately portray what we saw there, and it is only when the stench of the camp is smelled that anyone can have complete appreciation of the depths of degradation to which the German Nazi Government and those responsible for it and its agencies, organizations, and practices had dropped in their treatment of those who had failed to embrace the doctrines of the "master race."

CAMP DORA AT NORDHAUSEN

The group visited the concentration camp at Nordhausen, which is located in the Province of Saxony, about 125 miles southwest of Berlin, on May 1, 1945. This was a political concentration camp and was known as the Dora camp. It is located on the outskirts of Nordhausen, adjacent to a large underground manufacturing plant which produced V–1 bombs, the V–2's, airplane engines and parts, and other munitions of war. At the time of our visit to Nordhausen the camp had been in American hands about 3 weeks and, of course, did not portray the filth and operating conditions which existed at the time of its liberation. The prisoners at this camp had been used as slave labor in the underground factory and for work parties in adjacent farms and in smaller munitions factories. The magnitude of the operation at Nordhausen is demonstrated by the fact that there were 31 miles of railroad track in the underground factory. The factory itself contained well-organized production lines and enormous quantities of fine machine tools, many of which were new and all in fine

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operating condition. The underground factory had also been used as barracks for prisoners until the death rate exceeded that apparently desired and began to affect the efficiency of production. We observed a crematory similar to the one that we saw at Buchenwald. We observed a large cement apron on which we were told by a reliable inmate that 135 prisoners had been executed by hanging at the rate of 4 at a time a few days before the camp was overrun by the American forces. This inmate stated that all of the prisoners who were physically able were required to witness the executions. He also told us that the executions had been for violations of camp disciplinary regulations and for alleged sabotage in the underground factory. He further stated that the individuals executed on this occasion were all Russians. At the time of our visit to the camp it was being additionally used by the American authorities as a rendezvous for displaced persons who had been wandering about in the area.

The prisoners had been segregated by our forces after liberation as far as possible by nationalities, and every effort was made to alleviate their physical condition by food and medicine. On the whole, we found this camp to have been operated and administered much in the same manner as Buchenwald had been operated and managed. When the efficiency of the workers decreased as a result of the conditions under which they were required to live, their rations were decreased as punishment. This brought about a vicious circle in which the weak became weaker and were ultimately exterminated.

DACHAU

The committee next visited the infamous concentration camp at Dachau, in two groups, on May 2, 1945. Dachau is located in the province of Bavaria, about 325 miles south of Berlin. The groups visited Dachau within 48 hours after its liberation by American forces.

In the drive of General Patch's Seventh Army toward Munich, the Forty-fifth United States Division fought into Dachau 7 miles to the north and surprised and surrounded the concentration camp on the outskirts of the town. The camp was in charge of about 200 Storm Troopers, who resisted as the American army approached. The camp was occupied after many of the German guards were killed and the remainder captured.

Because of the surprise due to the speed of the American advance, this camp was captured practically intact. By orders of General Patch, the evidences of German brutality were left untouched awaiting our inspection. Two days later we arrived. We found a large, rectangular-shaped camp filled with numerous barracks or sheds, in which were perhaps 30,000 political prisoners. Two high, parallel barbed-wire fences surrounded the camp, the inner one 15 feet from the outside one, which was electrically charged. At intervals of about 50 yards, 20-foot towers rose above the outer wire, and from these towers armed guards looked down on the interior of the camp. At one end of the large enclosure was an open space for assembling the prisoners, and at the extreme end was a large administration building.

When we arrived there were many prisoners lying dead between the inner and the outer barbed-wire fences—apparently shot by the

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guards. The living—Russians, Poles, Dutch, and in fact, many nationalities—were being cared for by our Army. We found women segregated in another enclosure behind the administration building. An inspection of one of the better barracks for men disclosed 390 jammed into a room built to accommodate 50. Most were suffering from typhus or tuberculosis, and all were living skeletons due to lack of food. The stench was sickening.

Outside, lying in rows, were about 300 bodies of those who had died and had been collected that morning from the various barracks. They were yet to be disposed of, as were those lying between the fences, and others, including the bodies of some of the German guards, which were strewn along the approaches to the entrance.

This camp was apparently built in 1933 or 1934, and we were told the original occupants were those who dared to oppose the Hitler regime. After their liquidation, fresh prisoners in ever-increasing numbers were furnished by the countries overrun by the German armies. The complete break-down, by nationalities, of the prisoners in the camp at Dachau was being undertaken by the American Army authorities while we were there, but the record has not yet been received in Washington.

Across a canal or moat filled with water which ran between this wire-enclosed camp and the highway, there was what appeared to be an old German Army caserne, the buildings of which were scattered throughout an area of considerable size all completely surrounded by a stone wall. Trees lined the driveways in this secluded area, in the center of which was a modern brick building where the executions of the prisoners from the camp across the street took place.

As we visited Dachau we saw on a railroad sidetrack paralleling the main highway, and close to the gates of the prison camp, a train of cars which had been used to bring additional civilian prisoners to this camp. These cars were an assortment of odd boxcars, some of which could be locked, and some were the coal-car type. In each of them the floor of the car was covered with dead, emaciated bodies. In some of the cars there were more than enough to cover the floors. In size, these cars were of the small European type, which, when used for the movement of troops, would never accommodate more than 40 men. Nevertheless, the Army officials in charge of this camp advised us that there were 50 of these cars in this 1 train and that at least 100 of these civilian prisoners had been jammed into each car—locked in—and they had been on the road for several days without food or water and that approximately 3,000 of them were dead upon arrival and most of the others were in a dying condition.

We saw many dead bodies on the ground. These prisoners had apparently crawled out of the cars and had died on the ground. Our officials advised us that many of the others who had survived the trip in the cars had died since in the camp, and many more, although still alive, were starved beyond redemption.

Directly across the road from the cars—near the entrance of this Dachau Camp—we saw three dead members of the Nazi SS troops. Two had been shot, and the skull of one had been crushed. We were advised that these three were members of the SS guards at the prison who were captured and killed by Russian inmates of the prison when the camp was liberated by the advancing American Army.

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EXECUTION AT DACHAU

A distinguishing feature of the Dachau Camp was the gas chamber for the execution of prisoners and the somewhat elaborate facilities for execution by shooting.

The gas chamber was located in the center of a large room in the crematory building. It was built of concrete. Its dimensions were about 20 by 20 feet, and the ceiling was some 10 feet in height. In two opposite walls of the chamber were airtight doors through which condemned prisoners could be taken into the chamber for execution and removed after execution. The supply of gas into the chamber was controlled by means of two valves on one of the outer walls, and beneath the valves was a small glass-covered peephole through which the operator could watch the victims die. The gas was let into the chamber through pipes terminating in perforated brass fixtures set into the ceiling. The chamber was of size sufficient to execute probably a hundred men at one time.

The room in which the gas chamber stood was flanked on both ends by warerooms in which the bodies were placed after execution to await cremation. The size of each room was approximately 30 by 50 feet. At the time we visited the camp these warerooms were piled high with dead bodies. In one of the rooms the bodies were thrown in an irregular heap. In the other room they were neatly stacked like cordwood. The irregular pile of bodies was perhaps 10 feet high, covering most of the floor space. All of them were naked.

It was quite evident that the daily death rate at Dachau, by execution and otherwise, far exceeded the daily capacity of the crematory to dispose of the bodies. The stench indicated that some of them had been there for several days.

In the rear of the crematory building was an enclosure where the executions by shooting were carried out. There were three separate places for execution in this yard. One, we were informed, was for common political prisoners; one was for women; and one was for prisoners of distinction, including those who at some time had had military records. The latter were not prisoners of war. As had been stated, no prisoners of war were kept in any of the concentration camps, but all of the camps had political prisoners who had served in the armies of their countries prior to the beginning of the present war and, particularly, during the First World War.

These three places of execution, which were separated from each other by tight board fences, consisted of banks of earth some 20 feet in length and 3 feet high. The condemned prisoners knelt down facing the bank and were shot through the back of the head. The only difference between these separate places of execution was that in front of the bank of earth where the distinguished prisoners were shot there was a small boardwalk upon which the prisoners knelt, while the common prisoners and the women knelt on the bare ground. A considerable amount of blood still remained on the ground at two of these execution places.

In the enclosure was a pile of rough wooden coffins. Since we had seen no coffins at the other camps visited, we inquired why coffins were used at Dachau and were informed that these coffins were reserved for prisoners of distinction. The bodies of ordinary prisoners, if not cremated, were buried without coffins and usually without clothing.

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PART 3. CONCLUSION

While the above three camps which were visited by the joint committee differed in some details, they were all of the same general pattern and design and administered for the same purpose.

At each of these camps we found four general classifications of prisoners: First, political prisoners; second, habitual criminals; third, conscientious or religious objectors; fourth, persons who were imprisoned for failure to work.

Although differing in size, they all carried into effect the same pattern of death by hard labor, starvation, hanging, strangulation, disease, brutality, gas chambers, gallows, and filthy and unsanitary conditions, which meant inevitable death eventually to every imprisoned person.

We found, in each case, that the supervision of the camps was carried out by the criminal tactics of SS troops, who, in addition to their own brutality, assigned some of their punitive duties to the prisoners, especially the habitual criminals who had charge of the barracks in which all types of prisoners were subject to their vicious and inhuman methods.

We found that this entire program constituted a systematic form of torture and death administered to intellectuals, political leaders, and all others who would not embrace and support the Nazi philosophy and program. We found the extent, devices, methods, and conditions of torture almost beyond the power of words to describe.

We found, from all the evidence available, that in these camps the Jews and Russians and Poles were treated with a greater degree of severity than other nationalities. We found that a colossal scheme of extermination was planned and put into effect against all those in occupied countries who refused to accept the principles of nazi-ism or who opposed the saddling of the Nazi yoke on their countries. The Nazi leadership in the pursuit of this policy found especially expedient the use of various forms of terrorism calculated to reduce the opposition and to render futile all efforts to throw off the yoke.

The over-all pattern of the scheme varied but little. First, vast numbers of nationals of overrun countries were abducted and brought into Germany—sometimes whole families, sometimes just the men. The number of these persons is variously estimated at between twelve and twenty million people. These people were forced to labor long hours by their Nazi masters, and for slight infractions they were placed in concentration camps.

Likewise, the intelligentsia, college professors, former army generals, business leaders, and professional men of the occupied countries, were taken captive and placed in these camps unless they agreed to spread the doctrines advocated by the Nazis.

The treatment accorded to these prisoners in the concentration camps was generally as follows: They were herded together in some wooden barracks not large enough for one-tenth of their number. They were forced to sleep on wooden frames covered with wooden boards in tiers of two, three, and even four, sometimes with no covering, sometimes with a bundle of dirty rags serving both as pallet and coverlet.

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Their food consisted generally of about one-half a pound of black bread per day and a bowl of watery soup for noon and night, and not always that. Owing to the great numbers crowded into a small space and to the lack of adequate sustenance, lice and vermin multiplied, disease became rampant, and those who did not soon die of disease or torture began the long, slow process of starvation. Notwithstanding the deliberate starvation program inflicted upon these prisoners by lack of adequate food, we found no evidence that the people of Germany as a whole were suffering from any lack of sufficient food or clothing. The contrast was so striking that the only conclusion which we could reach was that the starvation of the inmates of these camps was deliberate.

Upon entrance into these camps, newcomers were forced to work either at an adjoining war factory or were placed "in commando" on various jobs in the vicinity, being returned each night to their stall in the barracks. Generally a German criminal was placed in charge of each "block" or shed in which the prisoners slept. Periodically he would choose the one prisoner of his block who seemed the most alert or intelligent or showed the most leadership qualities. These would report to the guards' room and would never be heard from again. The generally accepted belief of the prisoners was that these were shot or gassed or hanged and then cremated. A refusal to work or an infraction of the rules usually meant flogging and other types of torture, such as having the fingernails pulled out, and in each case usually ended in death after extensive suffering. The policies herein described constituted a calculated and diabolical program of planned torture and extermination on the part of those who were in control of the German Government. These camps, on the whole, were conducted and controlled by the SS troops and the Gestapo, who acted under orders from their superiors or who were given wide discretion in the methods which they were to adopt in perpetrating these hideous and inhuman sufferings.

It is the opinion of your committee that these practices constituted no less than organized crime against civilization and humanity and that those who were responsible for them should have meted out to them swift, certain, and adequate punishment.

We found that the propagation of the Nazi theories and the practices which were carried forward under those theories created within Germany a disregard for human rights and for the dignity of the individual human being, which not only degraded the life of the people within the German Reich but which was inevitably calculated to bring about war between Germany and her neighbors and was calculated also to subject the conquered nations to the brutalities and indignities which struck fear and terror into the hearts of those who might otherwise oppose these policies, which we have attempted to describe.

With reference to the punishment of those guilty of war crimes, which an indignant world will expect and demand, we desire to report that at the present time various agencies are actively and comprehensively engaged in the gathering of evidence throughout the regions where these atrocities were committed. The officers of our armies, and of the Allied armies, have been alert for many months to the conditions which prevailed in all Nazi-occupied territories, and a very competent corps of investigators in each military area, under the

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control of our armed forces and those of our allies, has been for months engaged in gathering and documenting testimony which will be available for use when those guilty of these atrocities are brought to trial. The Army of the United States alone has already gathered testimony and sworn statements that will fill many volumes.

In Paris the French Provisional Government has set up a commission for the investigation of war crimes. The Allied Nations have set up a war crimes commission, with its headquarters in London, made up of competent men representing 16 of the Allied Nations, and already specific charges are being made against many of the outstanding leaders of this criminal program.

It was the high privilege of the members of your committee to confer with our military authorities in Europe, with the French Commission in Paris, and the Allied Commission in London, concerning their methods and procedures and the results intended to be obtained by their activities, and the members of this committee were gratified at the thorough way in which this work is being undertaken. It has already been announced by the President that Justice Robert H. Jackson, of the Supreme Court of the United States, has been designated to represent this country in the preparation and presentation of the evidence which will be brought before such tribunals as may be in existence, or may be established, for the trial of major war criminals.

In view of all these activities, the committee does not feel at liberty at this time to recommend the creation of an additional agency for the investigation of these war crimes or for their ultimate disposition but feel that the agencies now dealing with the problem are approaching the subject from the standpoint of practical justice in every area and in all categories of crimes that may be involved.

The committee is happy to report that each and every member approached the performance of this task with solemnity and with a sense of responsibility. It was approached without regard to differences of political affiliation or geographical location. The committee feels that out of it all justice will emerge and that through the sickening spectacle which we have witnessed of the degradation to which human beings have been subjected will come ultimately a firmer realization that men of all nations and all tongues must resist encroachments of every theory and every ideology that debases mankind and that a more just and enduring peace may arise upon the ruins and from the sacrifices which the human race has endured through one of the most crucial periods of its history.

ALBEN W. BARKLEY.
WALTER F. GEORGE.
ELBERT D. THOMAS.
WAYLAND BROOKS.
KENNETH S. WHERRY.
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Doc. No. L159 APO 413 Date 22 August 1945

USA 222

STAFF EVIDENCE ANALYSIS

DESCRIPTION OF ATTACHED DOCUMENT (Under following headings):

Title and Nature: Atrocities and other conditions in concentration camps in Germany, report of Congressional Committee. Senate Document No. 47.

Date: 15 May 1945 Original ( ) Copy (x) Language:

If not English, is translation attached: Yes ( ) No ( )

LOCATION OF ORIGINAL (also WITNESS if applicable) as of 22 August 1945:

OCC London - printed copy

PERSONS IMPLICATED:

REFERENCES TO INDEX HEADINGS (Key to Par. nos. of Summary below):

ATROCITIES: Against Civilians (1)(2)(3)(4)(5); CONCENTRATION CAMPS (1)(2)(3)(4)(5); FORCED LABOR: (2)(3)(4)(5); SS (2)(4)(5)

NECESSARY PROCESSING TO PUT IN EVIDENTIARY FORM; LEADS:

Evidentiary in present form.

SUMMARY OF RELEVANT POINTS (with page references):

1. Report by Committee of six Sentators and six Representatives on their inspection of BUCHENWALD, NORDHAUSEN (CAMP DORA) and DACHAU Concentration Camps immediately after their liberation by American Armies. Three classes of evidence relies on: visual inspection, testimony of eye witnesses among prisoners, and compelling circumstantial evidence.

2. BUCHENWALD. SS Garrison fled. 20,000 prisoners found alive. Mission of camp was extermination, by starvations, beatings, torture, incredibly crowded sleeping conditions and sickness. Prisoners worked in adjoining armament factory. Crowded accommodations described. Hospital medical experiment building, and body disposal plant (crematory) described. 1800 bodies found. Food ration 6-700 calories per day. SS personnel ran the camp. Records showed 51,000 persons died in the camp.

3. CAMP DORA at NORDHAUSEN. In Saxony - prisoners worked at large underground factory producing V-1 bombs and parts for V-2 bombs. Conditions similar to BUCHENWALD.

4. DACHAU. Found about 30,000 political prisoners. Camp in charge of 200 Storm Troopers, who were killed or captured as American Forces surrounded camp. Of shipment of about 5,000 into camp by freight car, about 3000 had died enroute. Committee saw the train of cars. Gas chambers and enclosure for shootings described.

5. Conclusion. Camps were for political prisoners, habitual criminals, conscientious or religious objectors, persons who refused to work. Supervision of camps carried out by criminal tactics of SS troops. Prisoners forced to work at an adjoining war factory or in the camp.

Krieger

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